

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 002645

SIPDIS

STATE FOR ECA/PE/C/CU; NEA/PPD (CBOURGEOIS, JBAROODY, JGAFFNEY); NEA/ARN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OITP](#) [OEXC](#) [SCUL](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: Mr. Robert McNamara - Target-of-Opportunity

Musician: Evaluation

**¶11. Summary:** PAS Amman organized three public concerts and two workshops for musician Mr. Robert McNamara during his program in Jordan on May 19 through May 21. Mr. McNamara's program in Jordan was the first of PAS' cultural programs to be pursued following the events taking place in the region. Regardless of the general dispirited sentiment among Jordanians, various groups of people attended his concerts and enjoyed listening to him strumming on the guitar and attuned themselves to the medieval notes of the lute. Mr. McNamara's love for music and his instruments had a positive effect on his audiences, stirring up their admiration for his music. End summary.

**¶12. Description of Activity:** Both Mr. McNamara's public concerts were cosponsored by The National Music Conservatory and The Blue Fig Cafe. The first concert was a solo performance held in the main hall of the caf. Mr. McNamara's second concert was a special performance, as it was a fundraising event from which all proceeds were donated to the West Bank's Bir Zeit University's conservatory. Mr. McNamara performed alongside talented Jordanian musicians with whom he had rehearsed in preparation for the special tribute. The third and final concert was held at the multi-national American Community School (A.C.S.) for the entire student body, 360 students (kindergarten through Grade 12) and teaching staff. The first of Mr. McNamara's workshops was held at the National Music Conservatory for a number of students and instructors. The second workshop was held at the Yarmouk University's faculty of Fine Arts for almost eighty students of music and faculty members.

**¶13. Press Coverage:** There were regular daily radio announcements prior to Mr. McNamara's public concerts. On May 20, "Al-Ra'i" leading Arabic daily ran an article announcing the fundraising concert at Blue Fig Caf. The article discussed the rationale behind the concert and pointed out that Mr. McNamara's involvement in such an event proved that artistic expression is a channel for communication, regardless of the critical turn of events in the region. The Star Weekly also ran an article on the fundraising concert at Blue Fig Caf on May 23, declaring the joint efforts of the National Music Conservatory and Blue Fig Caf as a promotion of cultural awareness and understanding through music under a banner of support for the Palestinian cause. The article commented that Mr. McNamara's style was "Wonderfully direct and informative." The use of the lute in Mr. McNamara's performance was much enjoyed by the writer, who was in the audience and described it as "A wonderfully gentle introduction to what became a light and enjoyable music lesson." The article also touched on Mr. McNamara's other activities in Jordan, such as his workshops at Yarmouk University and the National Music Conservatory and it also mentioned his solo performance at Blue Fig Caf. Mr. McNamara was also featured on a live radio show on Jordan's FM English Language Radio Station alongside a Jordanian oud player. They discussed the fusion of their music and commented on the success of their work together. Mr. McNamara was interviewed for an hour. In the program, Mr. McNamara also declared his interest in introducing his music to Jordanian audiences as a reflection of American culture and in return introducing new oriental qualities to his own music.

**¶14. Date, Fiscal Year and Quarter:** May 19 - May 21, 2002; FY-02 Third Quarter.

**¶15. Justification and Objective:** PAS requested Mr. McNamara's visit to Jordan to expose Jordanian audiences to an assortment of classical guitar and to traditional American pieces such as 900 miles/Lily of the West and Old Joe Clark/Salt Creek and Somewhere Over the Rainbow by H. Arlen. PAS also envisioned introducing the Jordanian public to instruments unfamiliar to Jordanians, such as the lute and to new musical techniques. The importance of providing insight into the development of music and musical instruments over time, as was demonstrated during Mr. McNamara's program, was also taken into consideration.

**¶16. MPP Objective and Audiences Reached:** This program supported the MPP goal of promoting Jordanian understanding

and appreciation of U.S. society, culture and institutions. The concerts reached business leaders, academicians, artists, students and music lovers from the general public.

17. Result/impact: Very good. Mr. McNamara is a first-class musician. His performances were wonderful and his friendly personality encouraged his audiences to develop a connection with his music through his thorough explanation of his songs and his instruments. Mr. McNamara was pleasant in every situation and friendly and cooperative with his the musicians he worked with and his fans. The Public Affairs staff enjoyed his company and working with him very much.

18. Cost-sharing: The Blue Fig Cafe provided its musical venues and technical staff free of charge.

19. Quality of Support: None. This program was initiated by post. GNEHM